DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 714 RC 016 369

AUTHOR Howard, Gary; Neal, Colleen
TITLE The Native American Experience...A Special Report. Project R.E.A.C.H. Ethnic Perspectives Series.
INSTITUTION Arlington School District No. 16, WA.
SPONS AGENCY Western Washington Univ., Bellingham.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 36p.; For a related document, see RC 016 370.
AVAILABLE FROM Arlington School District, The REACH Center, 600 East 1st, Arlington, WA 98223 ($4.00 each or $2.00 each, when part of classroom adoption).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Culture; *American Indian History; *American Indian Reservations; American Indians; American Indian Studies; Cultural Background; Cultural Differences; *Cultural Influences; Federal Indian Relationship; *Government Role; Land Acquisition; *Land Settlement; Racial Attitudes; Racial Discrimination; *Racial Relations; Relocation; Reservation American Indians; Secondary Education; Treaties
IDENTIFIERS *Cultural Preservation

ABSTRACT

American history is looked at through the eyes of Native Americans. Chapter 1 covers legends and theories concerning the origins of the American Indians, the arrival of Columbus and the European stereotype of the American Indian, the early relationships between the Indians and Europeans, and the disputes over land. Chapter 2 discusses the United States government's policy to remove Indians from the lands east of the Mississippi, the ensuing court battles, and the Indian resistance to the westward expansion of the white population. Chapter 3 includes the Trail of Broken Treaties and the near destruction of the Indian culture, the modern Indian revival, and the contribution of the Indian people to the overall American culture. Each chapter has study questions. A map of the various regional groups and a 7-item bibliography are included. (JMM)

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The Native American Experience

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The Native American Experience

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The Ethnic Perspectives Series was developed as part of Project REACH, under ESEA Title IV-C funding in the Arlington School District, Arlington, Washington. Additional support was provided through the Teacher Corps project at Western Washington University. Orders for Project REACH materials should be addressed to:

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Preface

America is the home of many cultures and races of people. Because of this, the story of our country's past and present can be told from many different points of view. This booklet looks at American history through the eyes of one cultural group, the Native Americans (or American Indians). As you read, ask yourself how the Native American point of view might be the same or different from other cultural groups in our country.

Acknowledgments

This booklet is a product of the work and cooperation of many individuals. Special appreciation is extended to Richard Post, Superintendent of the Arlington School District, without whose support the project could never have been initiated. Dr. Herbert Hite, Director of the Teacher Corps Program at Western Washington University, provided support in the revision and printing of these booklets. Herbert Hower, Principal of the Arlington Middle School, was a strong supporter of the project in its developmental stage. Special thanks go to Linda Kavaney, Maryanne Larsen, Don Garrow, and Debbie Hodgson, and their students who were the first to try these materials in the classroom. Invaluable assistance was provided by Karen Aurand, Project REACH secretary, who typed and helped edit the many revisions of these booklets.

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Summary of Contents

Page

Chapter 1

A Case of Mistaken Identity: Columbus misnamed the Native American people, calling them Indians. The Indians had lived on the North American continent for many centuries before the Europeans arrived and had developed over 300 different tribal cultures. 6

Friends at First: Many of the early contacts between Indians and Europeans were friendly. Each group helped the other by exchanging knowledge and trade items 9

The Land That Could Not Be Divided: Indians and Europeans had very different ideas about how the land should be used and shared. The Indians began to realize that the Europeans were trying to take over their homelands. 10

Study Questions 14

Chapter 2

Indian Removal: The U.S. government adopted a policy to remove all Indians from the lands east of the Mississippi. Even though the Indians' right to their land was supported by the courts, the President and the army stepped in to take it away 16

Indian Resistance and the Losing of the West: The westward expansion of white population created pressure for the U.S. government to take over Indian lands west of the Mississippi. Many tribes resisted this invasion, and the U.S. Army carried on a long term war to defeat these groups. 19

Study Questions 22

Chapter 3

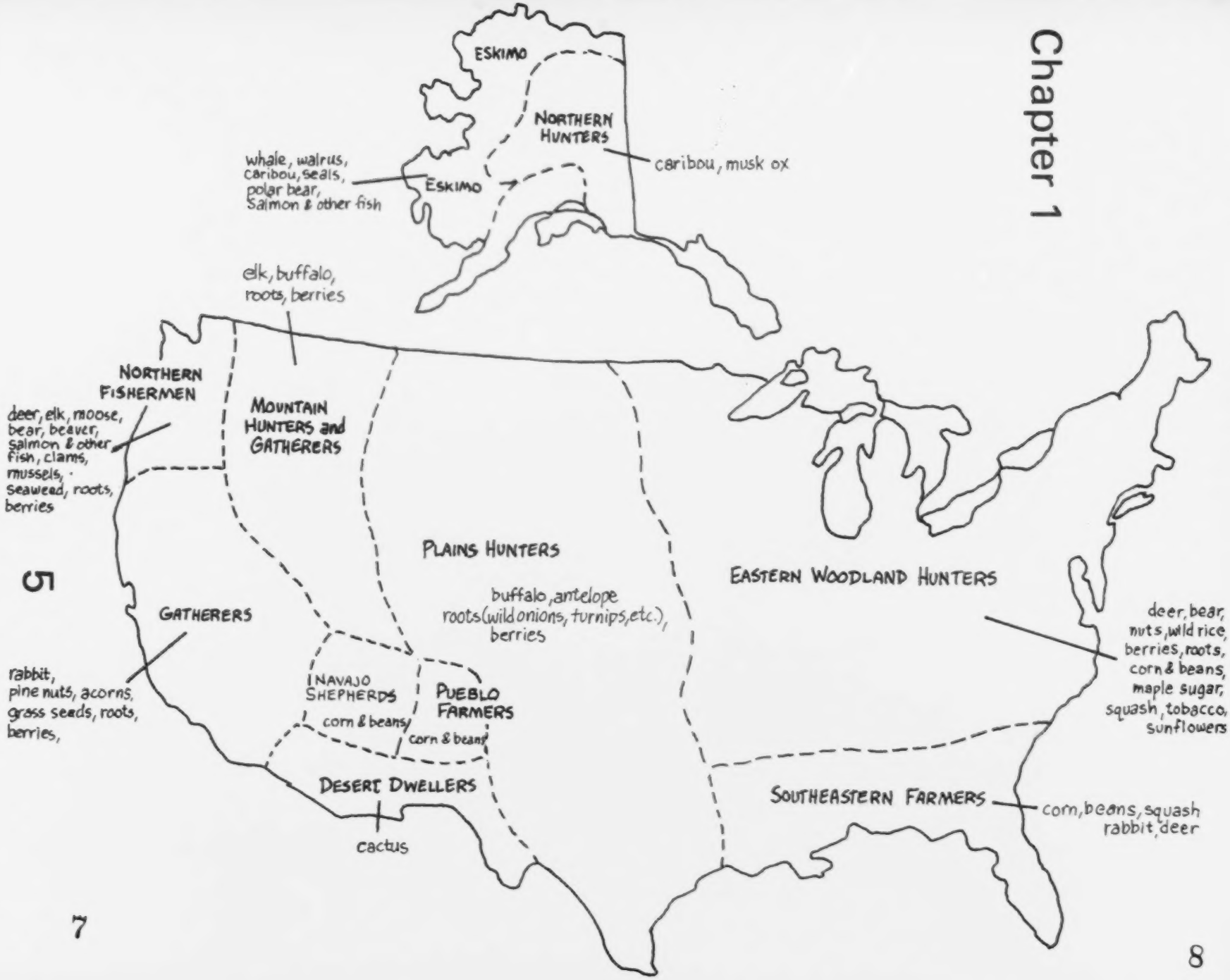
The Trail of Broken Treaties: At the beginning of the 20th century the Indians were at one of their lowest points. They had lost two-thirds of their reservation land and 75 percent of their population . 24

Modern Indian Revival: Today Native American people are working hard to preserve much of their traditional culture. They are learning to deal with the modern world without giving up their Indian identity. 27

Native American Contributions: The Indian people have contributed much to our overall American culture. Their sensitivity to the earth, their art, their wisdom, and their talented people are valuable resources for our country 30

Study Questions 32

Bibliography 33


ESKIMO
NORTHERN HUNTERS
caribou, musk ox
whale, walrus, caribou, seals, polar bear, salmon & other fish
ESKIMO
elk, buffalo, roots, berries
NORTHERN FISHERMEN
deer, elk, moose, bear, beaver, salmon & other fish, clams, mussels, seaweed, roots, berries
MOUNTAIN HUNTERS and GATHERERS
PLAINS HUNTERS
buffalo, antelope roots (wild onions, turnips, etc.), berries
EASTERN WOODLAND HUNTERS
deer, bear, nuts, wild rice, berries, roots, corn & beans, maple sugar, squash, tobacco, sunflowers
GATHERERS
rabbit, pine nuts, acorns, grass seeds, roots, berries,
NAVAJO SHEPHERDS
corn & beans
PUEBLO FARMERS
corn & beans
DESERT DWELLERS
cactus
SOUTHEASTERN FARMERS
corn, beans, squash rabbit, deer

A Case of Mistaken Identity

Long before the arrival of the first Europeans, the land we now know as North America was the home of many groups of people. It is not known exactly how long human beings had lived in this vast area, but some archeologists have concluded that the Native American people and their ancestors have occupied this land for over 35,000 years. Europeans have been here for less than 500 years.

There are different ideas about how the first human beings came to this region of the world. Many Native American tribes have their own legends to explain how their people came to be on this land. It is the belief of many that their ancestors originated here on American soil.

For instance, the Cheyennes believe their people once lived below the ground. (The Kiowa's story of origination also begins this way.) The Cheyennes lived in a large cave where it was dark. In the distance they could see light and began to travel towards it. Eventually they reached the source of the light. They found that the light was an opening. When the people went through the opening,

they came upon the earth. At first the light hurt their eyes. The people noticed that it was not always light. There was night and day. The Cheyennes had found themselves in a new country.

The legends are not all the same. The people of some Northwest Coast tribes have legends telling of how they originated from the salmon. This is one reason why the salmon has always been important to the coastal people.

A theory (idea) often heard from archeologists is that there was a land bridge across the Bering Sea during the last Ice Age. This bridge could have allowed people to migrate from Asia to North America, and then move south into all parts of the Americas in search of food and homes. According to this idea, the Native Americans of today may be very distant cousins of the Asian people. Many Native American people do not believe this theory because of the knowledge that has been passed on to them for thousands and thousands of years. In whatever way they may have gotten to this land, the American Indian people were definitely the "first Americans."

Columbus first happened upon the North American peoples in 1492. He made a rather big mistake by thinking that he had discovered a route to India. For this reason he called the people living here "Indians." Because of this mistaken identity, many descendants of the first Americans today prefer to be called "Native Americans" or "American Indians."

Another mistake often made by non-Indian people ever since Columbus' time has been to think that all "Indians" are alike. It is important to remember that Native American groups developed many different ways of life based on the environment and the type of land their people occupied. As the map at the beginning of this chapter shows, the land can be divided into ten cultural areas. The Native people from each area developed a special and unique culture to match the environment that surrounded their homes.

The traditional American Indian did not think of himself or herself as an "Indian." They saw themselves as tribal people identified by a tribal name -- Hopi, Sioux, Squamish, Iowa, Illinois, Cheyenne, or Aleut. In fact, there were about 200 different languages spoken by groups of Native Americans living all over the continent. Depending on what nature provided in their particular area, each tribe was very different in its methods of constructing homes, types of food, government, tools, and other customs.

For example, the Makahs of the Pacific Northwest Coast hunted whales in large cedar canoes on the open ocean, lived in huge cedar longhouses holding several families, wore cedarbark garments, and took salmon out of coastal streams. The Cheyenne of the Great Plains hunted buffalo as their main source of food, wore clothing made from animal hides, lived in tepees made from poles and skins, and traveled by foot and later by horse over vast areas of country. The Eastern tribes, such as the Iroquois, lived very different lives

than either the Makah or the Cheyenne. They wore deerskins and fur, cultivated large quantities of corn and other farm products, built large fortified cities, and developed a very complex form of government.

The Europeans had a stereotype that all Indians were alike. A stereotype is a false idea which is not based on fact. A stereotype puts all members of a culture or race in one box.

As we have seen, there was already a great deal of cultural diversity among Indians before the white man ever arrived. This means that the original Americans had developed many different ways of life. All Indians were not alike.

Friends at First

The early relationships between Indians and Europeans were usually friendly. Even though they came from very different cultural backgrounds, each group had something to offer the other. The Indians were able and willing to provide the new immigrants with valuable information about how to survive in North America. It was Massassoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, who taught the first English settlers at Plymouth colony how to build cabins, hunt in the Eastern woods, gather edible foods, and plant corn and squash. These early Europeans probably could not have survived in the new land without help from Massassoit and other Indian people.

The white people, on the other hand, helped the Indians by trading tools, firearms, and other European goods in exchange for furs. In the Southwest, the introduction of the horse by the Spaniards greatly advanced the Indians' ability to hunt and move over large areas of land. This sharing between the Europeans and the Indians is called acculturation, which means that each group was adding aspects of the other culture to its own, without totally giving up its own way of life. Thus, many of the early relationships between whites and Indians were helpful and positive for both groups. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case for most of the contacts these two cultural groups were to have over the next 350 years.

The Land That Could Not Be Divided

Very early in the relationship between Native Americans and the new American settlers, things began to happen which would lead to bitter conflict and much bloodshed. Some Europeans captured Indians as specimens and sent them back to Europe to be viewed by their countrymen. These kidnapped people often became gifts to rich nobles. White settlers also became quite effective at using trickery, bribery, and alcohol to cheat Indians out of their land. With events like these taking place, it is quite natural that the Native people would begin to view the new arrivals as a dangerous threat.

As greater numbers of whites came to the North American continent, the need for more land increased. The Indian people had a very

different relationship to the land than did the whites, and this was to be the basis for much of the misunderstanding and conflict between the two groups. For the Indians, there was no such thing as dividing the land into separate ownerships, with fences or imaginary lines marking off one person's land from another's. The earth, to the Indian, was a gift of the Great Spirit and was to be used by all people. The Indians could no more think of dividing up the land than they could think of fencing off the air or the sea. To the Indian, all was one.

The white people, on the other hand, were used to a European system of dividing lands into separate kingdoms, nation states, and countries. They had a sense of private ownership of property which was totally strange and unknown to the Native peoples of the American continent. Thus, when a white person would offer to trade money or goods in exchange for land, the Indians thought they were giving a gift in exchange for the right to use land that the Indians also could use. This must have seemed quite peculiar to the Indians, since they believed that the Great Spirit gave the earth to be used by all people anyway! But it was even more shocking to the Indians when they learned that this gift, or trade, or treaty was the white man's way of taking the land away from the Indians and saying they could no longer use it.

In the early days of white contact, the Indians were willing to share the land with the new arrivals. However, the Europeans'

belief that they could claim the land for themselves only, was something the Indians did not understand and gradually grew to hate. This land problem was an example of ethnocentrism, which means that the Europeans felt their own culture and way of doing things was superior to the Indian's way. As is usually the case, this ethnocentrism was going to lead to conflict between the Indians and the Europeans.

As more immigrants came, the Native Americans began to realize that the European settlement of the American continent was a threat to the Indian way of life. The relationship between the whites and the Indians gradually worsened, and fighting started to break out. One of the earliest Indian attempts to push back the European settlers took place in the Plymouth Colony in 1675. This was the homeland of Massassoit, the great chief who had helped the early Plymouth settlers survive in the new land. After these early friendly times, the Wampanoag tribe had suffered 40 years of being pushed farther and farther west and having more and more of their traditional homeland taken away.

When Massassoit died, his son, Philip, became a young chief. Philip saw the English were trying to eliminate his people, so he worked for 13 years to join Eastern tribes together to resist the European invasion. When fighting finally broke out in 1675, there followed two years of bloodshed in which 52 of the 90 New England settlements were attacked by Indians inspired by Philip's

leadership. These battles were called King Philip's War by the English. The Indians were finally defeated when Philip was killed in the last battle. The English colonists cut off his head, carved his body into sections, and put his hands in a bucket of rum to be preserved and shown off to other white settlers.

Another gallant Indian attempt to resist the white takeover of their land was led by the great Shawnee chief, Tecumseh. These are his words:

> The way, the only way to stop this evil white conquest and (invasion) is for all red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be now -- for it never was divided, but belongs to all. No tribe has a right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers, who demand all and will take no less . . . Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

Tecumseh did not believe that his people could or should give up their land. It was Tecumseh's great dream to unite all tribes in one army to defend their homeland against the whites. He was a very convincing and eloquent speaker, who spent most of his life traveling from tribe to tribe seeking their help in the great battle to come. But his dream proved to be too big a job for one man. He was killed in the War of 1812, and the dream of Indian unity against the whites died with him.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Use a dictionary to find the definition of diversity. Why can we say that there was cultural diversity in America even before the white man arrived?

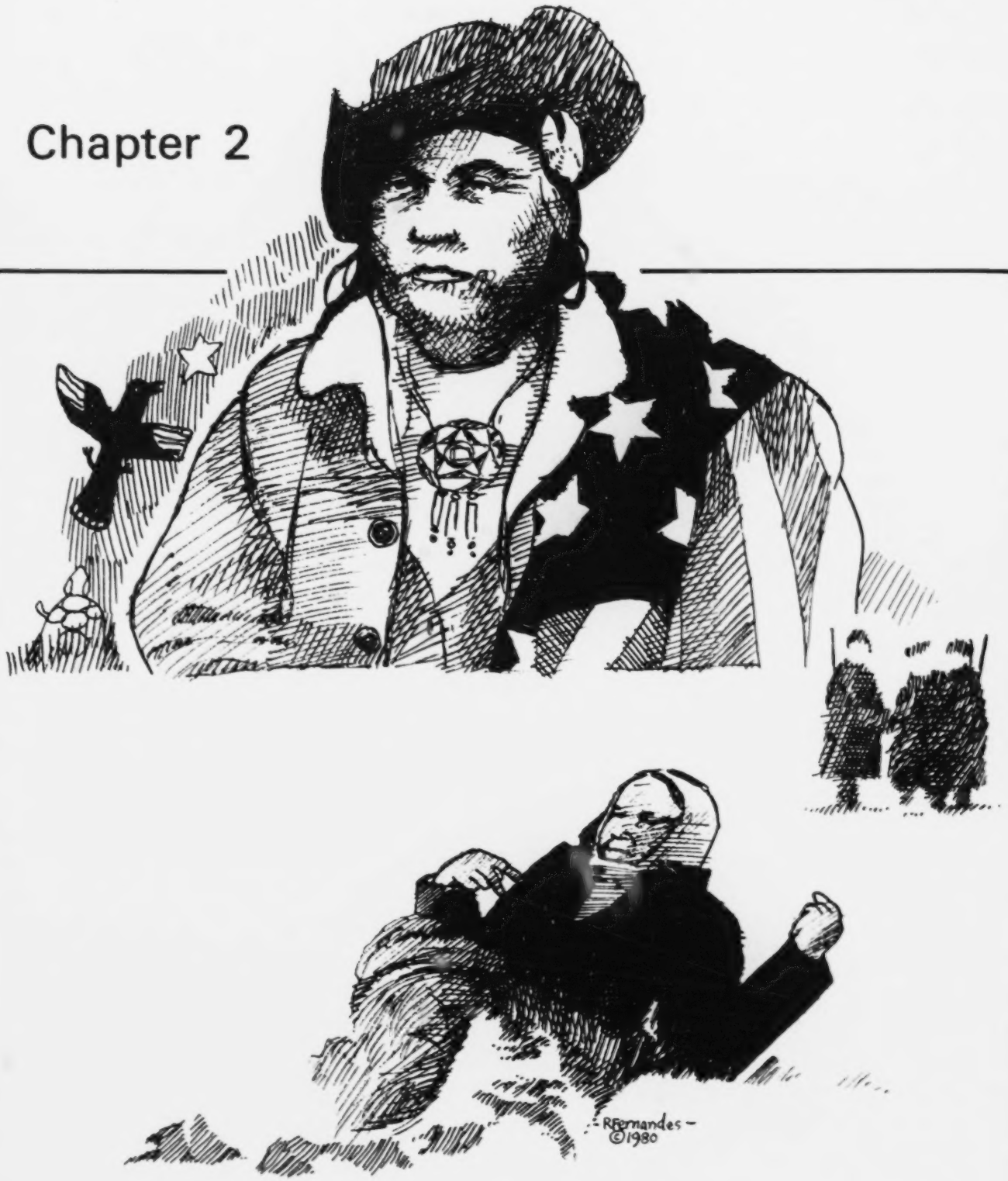
2. Give two examples of how the Indians and the Europeans experienced acculturation.

3. Describe how Indians and Europeans had different ways of looking at how the land should be used and shared.

4. What is ethnocentrism? Explain how it led to problems between the Indians and Europeans.

5. How do you think American History would have been different if Philip or Tecumseh had been successful in their battles?

Chapter 2



15

Indian Removal

After Tecumseh died, the white pressure to take over Indian lands became even stronger. In the early days of the new country (1786), Thomas Jefferson had said:

> It may be regarded as certain that not a foot of land will be taken from the Indians without their consent. The sacredness of their rights is felt by all thinking persons in America as in Europe.

Jefferson is just one example of the many white people throughout history who have defended the Indians' right to their land. But his noble idea seemed to have faded away by 1830. It was in that year that the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, forcing Indian people to leave their ancestral homes and move west of the Mississippi River. Taking the Indians' lands meant destroying their way of life, wiping out the foundation of their culture. The Removal Act was an act of cultural genocide, which means it was like killing the culture of the Indian people. As was stated before, the different cultures of the Indian people were developed from the natural environment they had lived with for many generations. Tribes from the Great Lakes region, for example, were used to a way

of life that included fishing, hunting, and food gathering. It was like a death sentence for these people to have to survive on the waterless plains where the government forced them to go. Some tribes were moved many times, and they had no time to adjust to a new environment. In this way the culture of many tribes was destroyed.

Most Indians did not obey the Removal Act without a battle. The Cherokees, for example, fought through legal means in the courts. They were being asked to leave their lush hunting and farming land of the Southeast to move to present-day Oklahoma, which was then named "Indian Territory." This was about the driest and least desirable land the government could find to "give" the Indians in exchange for their valuable homelands.

Since the Cherokees had built their culture over thousands of years in their homeland, they didn't want to go to Oklahoma. They had developed their own written language and almost 100 percent of the Cherokee people could read. They had a democratic government, farmed their land, sent their children to school, and many had become Christians. From the white man's point of view, they were "good Indians." They had <u>assimilated</u> to the white culture. <u>Assimilation</u> means they had given up many of their traditional ways and become almost like whites. Why then were they forced to leave their homes? The answer is clear: the whites wanted their rich land.

The Cherokees chose to fight their battle in a peaceful way through the white man's courts. Their case was carried all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court decided that the removal of the Cherokees from their land would be a violation of the Constitution. The Indians had won a major legal battle. However, the President of the United States at that time, Andrew Jackson, was a strong supporter of the Removal Act. Gold had been discovered on the Cherokee lands and white pressure to move in was growing strong. President Jackson chose to ignore the Court's decision. He sent federal troops to Georgia and forced the removal of the Cherokee people from their homes and lands. Even the power of the highest court in our nation could not protect the Indians' right to their own land.

The Cherokees' sad journey to their new "home" in the deserts of Oklahoma is called the "Trail of Tears." Almost 25 percent of their people died on the way. By this time in American history, the U.S. government had begun to feel that they had a right to take over the Indian lands. This idea was called Manifest Destiny. It was an ethnocentric belief because it ignored most of the rights the Indians had to their land. Manifest Destiny tended to put the desires of white people ahead of the rights of Indian people. The idea of Manifest Destiny has been a powerful force throughout American history.

Indian Resistance and the Losing of the West

With the Indian Removal program, the U.S. government had pretty well taken over all the land east of the Mississippi River. But with the constant flow of new European immigrants, there came an even greater demand for more land. The next great challenge for U.S. settlers was to "civilize" the West, which, of course, meant taking away more of the Indians' traditional homeland.

As much as possible, the U.S. government tried to use treaties as their way of taking over Indian lands in the West. Treaties were official written agreements between the U.S. government and an Indian nation, usually taking away the tribe's lands in exchange for some promises of gifts, money or a new reservation. Some peace-loving tribes were willing to move rather than fight. The Winnebagos, for example, were forced to move as many as six times over a period of 30 years. Each time they signed a new treaty in exchange for a new reservation, and each time it was taken away. The Indians were getting a lot of practice signing treaties. One Cherokee newspaper had this to say about how the treaty signing program worked:

> A commissioner will be sent down to negotiate, with a pocket full of money and his mouth full of lies. Some chiefs he will bribe, some he will flatter, and some he will make drunk; and the result will be something that will be called a treaty.*

* William T. Hagan, American Indians (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) p.99.

It was the Constitution of the United States which gave the government the power to make treaties with Indians and other nations. That same Constitution guaranteed each individual the protection of human rights, such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The methods used in the constant making and breaking of treaties with the Indian people did not follow these ideas in the Constitution.

Not all tribes were as easy to move away as were the Winnebagos. The Seminoles, for example, fought for seven years to resist removal, and cost the U.S. government 1,500 men and 50 million dollars before they were finally forced into Indian Territory. The Nez Perce of Washington and Oregon had agreed to move to a reservation in 1855, but were later told to leave when gold was discovered there. Chief Joseph and many of his people refused to leave. Their battle followed a 1,300 mile trail before the government troops finally forced Joseph to surrender.

Another story of Indian resistance comes from the Modoc tribe of northern California. They were forced onto a reservation in Oregon to live with old tribal enemies who continued to torment them. Finally a young Modoc chief, who was called Captain Jack by the whites, led a group of his people back to their traditional lands. Their request to be given a place to live in their homeland was denied by the government. U.S. troops engaged in battle with Jack and his men, who were able to hold off the troops for several

months. When they were finally captured, Jack and three of his men were hanged, and the rest of the Modoc people were sent to Indian Territory.

Stories like those of Captain Jack, Chief Joseph, the Seminoles, and the Cherokees were repeated hundreds of times throughout the period of Indian Removal. The Indian people were moved from one place to another, either peacefully or by force, to make room for the ever growing waves of white westward expansion. At times the U.S. government practiced a policy of genocide toward groups of Indians who tried to resist. Genocide is similar to what Hitler did to the Jews during World War II. It is an attempt to kill off a whole group of people merely because some powerful group wants them eliminated.

Chapter 2 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Read the quote from Thomas Jefferson on page 16. Why do you feel this promise was not kept?

2. Give examples of how the Cherokees had assimilated to European culture.

3. Explain why the idea of Manifest Destiny was an example of ethnocentrism.

4. Why did Chief Joseph and Captain Jack engage in battles with the U.S. Army?

5. Why do you think constitutional rights were not granted to the Indians in their land disputes with white settlers?

6. If you were a white settler moving West, how would you have handled these land problems with the Indians?

Chapter 3

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The Trail of Broken Treaties

There are many ways that a culture can be destroyed, and most of them happened to the Indians of North America. One way was to have their homeland taken away and be forced to live in areas which were strange, harsh, and uninhabitable. We have seen that this was repeated many times with most of the Indian tribes. Another method was to engage in war and destroy the Indians through battle and bloodshed. A third tactic was to destroy the Indians' culture by not allowing them to practice their traditions and customs. Laws were passed in the 19th and 20th centuries which prohibited Indians from speaking their own languages and engaging in their traditional religious ceremonies. Indian students attending reservation schools had to wear white man's clothes, speak English, and boys had to cut their hair. This third method was an attempt to force the Indian people to assimilate to the white culture.

A fourth method used to destroy the Indian culture was to take away their traditional way of making a living. For example, the buffalo was the most important necessity in the life of the Plains Indians. Tribes such as the Cheyenne, Dakota, and Pawnee depended on the

buffalo for almost everything they had: food, clothing, tools, weapons, houses, and ceremonial life. The U.S. government was able to bring these people under control by slaughtering the huge buffalo herds on the Plains. When there were no more buffalo to hunt, these tribes had to move to the reservations. Living on the reservation was the only way they could get the food and blankets handed out by the government. In this way the Indians became dependent on the white man to support them and lost much of their freedom.

Disease was another powerful force which threatened the existence of the Native Americans. The Indians had no immunity to white man's diseases, such as smallpox and tuberculosis. Most white people did not intend to give these diseases to Indians. However, there are records of blankets infected with smallpox being intentionally given out to Indians, thus causing widespread epidemics and death. In the history of our country there have been many more Indians killed by the white man's diseases than by his bullets. Among some tribes of the Puget Sound area, for example, three epidemics of smallpox between 1780 and 1850, had wiped out 80 percent of the Native American population.

One of the most destructive forces for the Indian people was the constant making and breaking of promises carried out by the U.S. government. Lands which were promised to the Indians in the treaties were often taken away when gold, oil, copper, or other valuable resources were found there. By 1885 most of the "Indian

Uprisings" had been settled and the few remaining Indians were put away on reservations throughout the nation. The vast region of North America which had once been used freely by the Indians, had shrunk to a few pockets of land they could call "theirs." These reservation lands had been promised to them "as long as the rivers shall run and as long as the grass shall grow."

The rivers still ran and the grass kept growing, but the U.S. government created a new law which would lead to the loss of much of the land still remaining in Indian hands. This new tactic was called the Dawes Severalty Act which was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1887. The Dawes Act divided up the reservation land into separate ownerships to be given to each tribal member. Each adult Indian received 160 acres and each child received 80 acres. Many well-meaning white people supported this law, because they felt it would help the Indians become independent farmers. The problem for the Indian was that this division of the land still left thousands of acres of reservation land which belonged to no one. The Dawes Act said that this left-over land could be sold or leased to whites, and that individual Indians could sell or lease their acreage as well. The Dawes Act created a huge real estate bonanza for white people. They moved in and created all kinds of schemes and bamboozles to get control of the tribal lands. When this law was first enacted in 1887 the Indians held 138 million acres of land. By 1932, whites had gained 90 million acres. The

Native Americans had lost 2/3 of the land given to them in the "sacred" treaties.

Before the Europeans came to America, the total Indian population north of Mexico had been about one million people. Through war, disease, starvation, and loss of their homeland, this population had decreased 75 percent by 1890. At the beginning of the 20th century there were only 250,000 Native American people left in all of North America.

Modern Indian Revival

Fortunately, the story of the Native Americans does not end with their near extinction at the end of the 19th century. Today the Indian population is growing rapidly, approaching the size it was when the Europeans first arrived, about one million people. The Native Americans are also actively involved in keeping many parts of their traditional culture alive. They are fighting vigorously in the courts to keep or regain the rights and the lands promised to them in the original treaties. There are still many problems to solve, but the Indians have proven themselves to be a proud and powerful people, capable of overcoming the pain of the past.

The legal battle over fishing rights in the State of Washington is one example of how modern Indians are working to keep their culture alive. Their concerns were made public in the early 1960's when Indians held "fish-ins" on the Puyallup and Nisqually Rivers. In

these demonstrations the tribal fishermen were testing out their right to fish in their traditional fishing grounds. The sites of the fish-ins were not considered by the State to be within the legal boundaries of the reservation, but they were fishing areas which the Puyallup and Nisqually Indians felt they had never given up in the treaties. So, to reclaim their traditional rights, the Indians placed their nets in the rivers and allowed themselves to be arrested. They gained national publicity for their cause, and many influential people, non-Indians as well as Indians, began to support them. Actor Marlon Brando and Black comedian Dick Gregory joined in the fish-ins and had themselves arrested to support the Indians' struggle. The issue finally went to the federal district court in Washington where Judge George Boldt decided in the Indians' favor. After three years of hearing all the evidence and testimony on the question, Judge Boldt decided that the Indians did in fact have the right to fish in their traditional places.

The success of Washington State Indians in their fishing-rights struggle inspired Indians throughout the nation. The decade of the 1970's was a time of many Indian protests, demonstrations, and legal battles to maintain the lands and rights guaranteed in the treaties. The American Indian Movement (AIM), a group made up of Indian activists, has helped bring these issues to national attention. Not all Indian people agree with the aggressive actions of AIM members, but they do agree that the rights of Indian people need to

be restored. AIM participated in the Trail of Broken Treaties caravan to Washington, D.C., in 1972. In this event Indian people from all parts of the country marched on the nation's capitol to state their concerns. AIM was also involved in the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. This demonstration attracted the attention of the whole nation as Indian people occupied federal government property to voice their concern for traditional treaty rights.

Today one of the biggest challenges facing the Indian people is to gain the power of self-determination. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, D.C., has historically controlled the lives of Indian people. The BIA is run by the federal government and has not always been sensitive to the real needs of Indian people. Self-determination means that the Indian people would be able to make the decisions and run the programs that affect their own lives. Self-determination means that Indian people will be able to get along in the white world and protect their interests, but not lose their culture and identity. Self-determination also means that Indians will be able to set up their own businesses to take advantage of the rich natural resources of tribal lands. Thus, profits will go to the Indians themselves, rather than being taken by white-owned businesses.

Native Americans were made U.S. citizens by an act of Congress in 1924. In some ways this was a blessing for the Indians, because it

recognized their existence and opened the door for them to voice their opinions by voting. But citizenship also caused some problems. Some white people claimed that gaining citizenship ended the special relationship set up in the treaties between the U.S. and the many Indian tribes. These whites argued for termination (ending) of Indian rights. This would mean the loss of the reservations and many Indian programs in the areas of health and education.

An individual Indian person today does not receive any necessary benefits just because he or she is Indian. Many Native Americans live and own homes off the reservation, pay their taxes, and live like any other member of American society. If an Indian person decides to go back to the reservation, which is sometimes called "returning to the blanket," then he or she may receive some rights set aside just for reservation Indians. But no government checks, food stamps, or welfare payments come to Indian people every month just for being Indians. However, the Indian people as a whole do have a special relationship with the government which promises protection of their lands and rights given in the original treaties. Indian people are working constantly today to make sure this special relationship is not terminated.

Native American Contributions

The Indian people were the first Americans, and throughout history they have contributed much to the overall culture of our country. Their deeply spiritual relationship with nature and the land has helped teach all people to respect our environment. Without help from

the Indian people, the early European settlers would probably not have survived.

The Iroquois League of Nations, also known as the Six Nations, inspired the writers of our country's constitution. The League was made up of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. The league that these nations formed had a democratic government. Their constitution was oral rather than written and was maintained by a governing council. The council only dealt with affairs affecting the whole league and left tribal matters to the individual nations. The founding fathers of the U.S. Constitution knew about the Iroquois League of Nations' government and admired it. Many of the League's ideas were used to help form the new government of the United States.

American Indian skill in basketry, wood carving, jewelry, music, and other arts and crafts has added a unique form of beauty to our nation's experience. We have gained a great deal of wisdom and philosophy from Indian leaders such as Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, Black Elk, and Pretty Shield, a Crow medicine woman. Jim Thorpe, Buffey Saint-Marie, and Will Rogers are examples of modern Indian people who have won fame in the fields of sports, music, and humor. Vine Deloria, Jr. is a modern Indian writer who has helped present the Indian viewpoint to all Americans. His books include Custer Died For Your Sins, Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties, and God is Red. Indian culture is still very much alive, and the Indian people are a growing and powerful force in America today.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Describe at least four of the methods or forces which had almost destroyed the Indian culture by the end of the 19th century.

2. By 1932, how much of their original reservation lands had the Indians lost? Describe how the Dawes Act caused much of this loss.

3. What were Indians trying to prove in the 1960's by holding "fish-ins" on the Puyallup and Nisqually Rivers of Washington State?

4. Explain why self-determination is so important to the Indians today.

5. When did Indians become U.S. citizens? Do you think that the special rights given to Indians in the original treaties should have been taken away when they become citizens? Why or why not?

6. Do you think this reading material has been a fair statement of the Indian point of view on American history? Why or why not?

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